

## REMARKS

The claims have been amended to eliminate multiple dependencies.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Figure 6**

Figure 6 displays a series of 18 histograms showing the distribution of the number of nodes per cluster ( $n_c$ ) for different values of  $\alpha$ . The x-axis represents the number of nodes per cluster ( $n_c$ ), ranging from 0 to 10. The y-axis represents the frequency or probability density, ranging from 0 to 0.001. The distributions are labeled with their corresponding  $\alpha$  values: 0.0001, 0.0002, 0.0005, 0.001, 0.002, 0.005, 0.01, 0.02, 0.05, 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50. As  $\alpha$  increases, the distribution shifts towards higher values of  $n_c$ , indicating larger clusters.

ATTACHMENT

3. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the male (1, 5, 7, 9) and female (2, 6, 8) parts comprise at least first (100; 52, 53; 72, 73; 92, 93) and second (23a, 25a; 63a, 65a; 83a, 85a) respective surface features disposed facing one another for an extreme relative axial position of the male and female parts, selectively obtained by completely inserting the barrel (10, 50, 70, 90) into the foot (21, 61, 81), the first and second surface features mutually cooperating to maintain the male (1, 5, 7, 9) and female (2, 6, 8) parts in the extreme relative axial position.

6. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims combined with claims 2 and] claim 3, characterized in that the hollow foot (21, 61, 81) comprises a plurality of prongs (23, 25; 63, 65; 83, 85) having respective attached ends (63b, 65b; 83b, 85b) by which these prongs are joined to the cap (20, 60, 80), and respective radially converging free ends (63a, 65a; 83a, 85a), which between them define the minimum internal transverse dimension (Dmin) of the foot (21, 61, 81), and wherein the second surface feature is formed by the free ends of the prongs (23a, 25a; 63a, 65a; 83a, 85a).

7. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims combined with] claim 2, characterized in that the hollow foot (61, 81) comprises two prongs (63, 65; 83, 85) separated from one another by an open space (E) for the unlocked configuration of the foot, and in that the barrel (50, 70, 90) has at least a second transverse dimension (D2), that selectively enters the open space, the result of which is that the hollow foot (61; 81) selectively adopts its unlocked configuration for a second relative rotational position of the barrel (50, 70, 90) and the foot (61, 81), independently from the relative axial position of the male and female parts.

9. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that at least one elastic radial tab (26, 28; 86, 88) is provided in the opening (24) of the cap in order to selectively cooperate with the barrel.

10. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the inner branch (601, 801) of the cap includes at least two internal elastic tabs (6011, 6012; 8011, 8012) capable of applying pressure to the stack of panels in the locked configuration of the foot.

11. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the clip is produced by cutting, bending and heat treating a metal blank.

12. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the clip (2, 6, 8) is made of tempered steel.

13. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims combined with] claim 8, characterized in that the third (714a, 715a; 914a, 915a) and fourth (614a, 615a; 814, 815a) surface features are respectively constituted by an axial rib of the barrel and by a corresponding cutout of the cap.

14. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims combined with] claim 8, characterized in that the third and fourth surface features are respectively constituted by a recess of the head and by a boss of the cap.

15. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the barrel (70) has a collar (709) inserted into the opening of the cap counter to an elastic force and rendering the male and female parts inseparable from one another.

16. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the head (11, 51, 71) presses against the outer branch (202, 602), for the locked configuration of the foot (21, 61), and moves the inner and outer branches 601, 602 toward one another so as to generate an elastic stress between them.

17. (Amended) Fastening device according to [any of claims] 1 through 13] claim 1, characterized in that the head (91) passes through the outer branch (802) and comes to rest against the inner branch (801) of the cap (80) for the locked configuration of the foot (81).

19. (Amended) Assembly constituted by a fastening device according to [any of claims 1 through 16] claim 1 and by a stack of panels (3, 4) in which bores (30, 40) are provided, and including a bottom panel (4), in which assembly the thickness of the stack is between 0.5 and 3 mm, while the bore in the bottom panel has a larger transverse dimension of 7.7 mm.

20. (Amended) Assembly constituted by a fastening device according to [any of claims 1 through 16] claim 1 and by a stack of panels (3, 4) in which bores (30, 40) are provided, and including a bottom panel (4), in which assembly the thickness of the stack is between 3 and 4.5 mm, while the bore in the bottom panel (4) has a larger transverse dimension of 8.2 mm.

21. (Amended) Assembly constituted by a fastening device according to [any of claims 1 through 16] claim 1 and by a stack of panels (3, 4) in which bores (30, 40) are provided and including a bottom panel (4), in which assembly the thickness of the stack is between 4.5 and 6 mm, while the bore in the bottom panel (4) has a larger transverse dimension of 8.7 mm.

22. (Amended) Assembly constituted by a fastening device according to [any of claims 1 through 16] claim 1 and by a stack of panels (3, 4) in which bores (30, 40) are provided and including a bottom panel (4), in which assembly the thickness of the stack is between 6 and 7 mm, while the bore in the bottom panel (4) has a larger transverse dimension of 9.2 mm.